

PREPAY MOBILE PHONES

CONTRACT KILLERS

Commitment isn't for everyone, so a prepay mobile phone is perfect for those who don't like signing contracts. We test 12 handsets that promise to make your life less complicated

INTRODUCTION

We review mobile phones every month in our *What's New* section. These are often amazingly powerful miniature computers, but they can be incredibly expensive, even with a monthly contract.

Not everyone wants to spend a fortune on a phone or be locked into paying a set amount every month for a year. Fortunately, you can get most of the features of a top-of-the-range contract phone with a prepay phone costing as little as £50. If all you need to do is make calls and send texts, you can even pick up a simple handset for just £10.

We've gathered 12 phones available on various prepay tariffs. All can make calls and send texts, while most have cameras, can send email and even browse the web. Whatever your needs, there's a handset here to suit you.

Chris Fynamore
Labs Manager



chris@computershopper.co.uk

Choosing a... Prepay Mobile Phone

Before you buy a prepay phone, it's important to check that it does everything you need it to do. Prepay phones tend not to be smartphones, so you usually can't install additional applications to replace any missing features. You also need to check that you can buy the phone on a tariff that suits the way you'll use it. We've summarised the prepay tariffs of the UK's major networks in our table on page 112 to help you choose.

Don't forget that if you are a heavy phone user it may be more economical to buy a phone on a contract, as this will give you free minutes and messages as well as a subsidised handset.

SUITS YOU, SIR

Even though all the phones in the group have address books and enable you to make calls and send texts, most people want their phone to do a little more than the basics. Nine of the phones have integrated cameras, but three have only a tiny 0.3-megapixel resolution so the images are no good for viewing on a PC.

Nine of the phones can connect to POP3 or IMAP email accounts and download messages, and eight have a built-in MP3 player. If you want your phone to double as a music player, look for a handset with a memory card slot for adding extra storage. Also, bear in mind that most mobile phone headphones are pretty poor,

and the only handsets in the group that provide a standard socket for replacement headphones are Sony Ericsson's W200i and W880i.

You should also consider which extra programs you need on your phone. Some of the phones have useful extras, such as powerful organiser features that can synchronise your contacts and calendar with a PC, as well as helpful utilities such as currency converters and countdown timers. We've mentioned in the individual reviews which phones have a comprehensive suite of applications as standard.

SURF'S UP

All but the very cheapest phones in this month's Labs can browse the internet, but the quality of their browsers varies significantly. None of the internet-capable phones had any trouble with dedicated mobile internet pages, and some could even reformat full-size webpages to fit the screen. They don't have particularly powerful browsers, though, so for serious mobile internet use you should buy a fully fledged smartphone on a contract. Five of the phones in the group support 3G data, which is a much faster connection than GPRS.

If you intend to travel outside Europe with your phone, you should look for a tri-band or ideally a quad-band phone, as these will let you connect to most mobile networks worldwide.

MOTOROLA MotoFone F3

★★★

£10 inc VAT

From www.orange.co.uk

Motorola's MotoFone F3 is the cheapest phone in the group, and definitely the most unusual. It's a stripped-down mobile, with no extras such as a web browser or MP3 player. It's designed just for making calls and sending texts.

Instead of a backlit LCD screen consisting of a grid of pixels, the F3 has a black-and-white display that forms numbers and letters out of lines, as a calculator does. The screen is easy to see even in sunlight, and with no backlight it hardly uses any power. This is the main reason for the phone's astonishing claimed 12 days' standby battery life.

Instead of a menu system, the phone has small icons to represent the phone's options, which you access with soft keys on the main screen. The function of each icon isn't obvious without the manual, but once you get used to them it's easy enough to make calls from contacts stored on the SIM card and to add new numbers. Texting is basic, however. There's no predictive text, and the huge letters and small screen mean few letters fit on the display. This means you have to scroll around to read a text, which makes it hard to understand messages unless they're written in text speak. There's also no settings menu, so to change settings such as disabling keypad tones you have to type in a string of asterisks and a number code.

Motorola's MotoFone F3 is a great idea and is astonishingly cheap for a mobile phone. Unfortunately, its tricky interface and lack of predictive text make it hard to recommend. Nokia's 2310 is worth the extra £10.



SUMMARY

- ✓ Very cheap
- ✗ No predictive text
- ✗ Hard to use

MOBILE PHONE GSM 900/1800,
2in main display
PART CODE MC3-41J11
DETAILS www.motorola.com

NOKIA 2310

★★★★★

£20 inc VAT

From www.t-mobile.co.uk

Nokia's 2310 is another phone with an incredibly low price. Unlike Motorola's MotoFone F3, it has many of the features found on pricier models.

The 2310 is light and compact. Its screen has a low resolution and colour depth, so the supplied games don't look very impressive, but text is clear. Its keypad buttons are large enough to be easy to use, but they are fairly wobbly.

The phone is very simple to use. You navigate the main menu with the directional keypad, and select options with the soft keys under the display. It has an impressive number of features considering its low price. There's a calculator, stopwatch and countdown timer, and a simple calendar application that lets you add reminders. There's also an application that converts between various units of weight, area, length, volume and currency. The phone has no MP3 player, but it does have an FM radio, and comes with a set of stereo headphones that double as a hands-free kit. It doesn't have Bluetooth, so you can't use a wireless headset when driving.

The 2310 uses Nokia's predictive text system for messaging. There's no email client, but it can link up to six texts to form a long message. Call quality is reasonable, although recipients complained of a slightly over-compressed sound.

Nokia's 2310 is an excellent phone for the price. It's compact, has all the features most people could want and is very cheap. It's a Budget Buy.



SUMMARY

- ✓ Very good value
- ✓ Easy to use
- ✓ Useful standard applications

MOBILE PHONE GSM 900/1800, 1.5in
96x98-resolution main display, 4MB
internal memory PART CODE 2310
DETAILS www.nokia.co.uk

VIRGIN MOBILE Lobster 320

★★★★

£25 inc VAT

From www.virginmobile.com

Virgin's Lobster 320 is an inexpensive phone that also manages to be stylish. It's a tiny, slim clamshell with a shiny front and textured back. Inside, the phone looks cheaper and less flash, but the large number keys and directional keypad are easy to use. The phone also has a good screen for the price, with bright colours and very clear text.

The menu system has large icons for the main menus and sub-menus arranged as numbered text lists, and is very easy to use. The phone comes with a USB cable and PC software for synchronising your contacts with your PC in VCard format. It's useful for backing up your contacts and SMS messages, and is a refreshing addition to such a budget phone. The rest of the features are basic, with no countdown timer or calendar reminder function.

Unfortunately, texting is confusing. Instead of the usual T9 predictive text system, the Lobster 320 uses a system called eZi English. As you type, suggested words appear at the bottom of the screen, and you pick the one you want and press OK to add it. This works well enough, but the phone doesn't recognise new sentences and add capital letters accordingly, and seems to switch between lower case and title case at random.

The Lobster 320 is a tiny and good-looking phone with a great screen. It's also very good value, but if you like to send lots of texts, you're better off with Nokia's 2310.



SUMMARY

- ✓ Very good value
- ✓ Slim and light
- ✗ Annoying texting

MOBILE PHONE GSM 900/1800,
1.5in 128x128-resolution main
display, 0.3-megapixel camera, 2MB
internal memory, USB connectivity
PART CODE 320
DETAILS www.virginmobile.com

O₂ Jet

★★★★★

£40 inc VAT

From www.o2.co.uk

O₂'s Jet is a no-nonsense business phone. It doesn't have any extras such as a camera or music player, but it does have email, a good keyboard and astounding battery life.

The Jet is fairly large, and is the second-heaviest handset in the group. Much of this is due to its huge battery, which explains its astonishing claimed battery life of nine hours' talktime and 22 days' standby, so it's a good choice if you spend a lot of time away from a power socket. The handset also charges over USB, so you can power it from your laptop, and comes with a USB dock, so you can leave it plugged in and synchronise with your PC while you're at your desk. The phone comes with a wired hands-free kit and a car charger, and has Bluetooth for wireless hands-free use. It includes software that can synchronise your contacts and calendar with Outlook or Outlook Express.

The Jet has a fairly large screen that's bright and very clear. The simple icon- and text-driven interface is easy to use, and its large keys are perfect for text entry. It also supports POP3 and IMAP email. The Jet's predictive text system is easy to use, but the phone struggles to keep up when you're entering text.

The slow texting is a shame, because otherwise O₂'s Jet is a fine, simple business phone at a low price. If you make plenty of voice calls, though, it's a good buy.



SUMMARY

- ✓ Huge battery life
- ✓ Easy to use
- ✗ Slow texting

MOBILE PHONE GSM
850/900/1800/1900, GPRS data, 2in
main display, 55MB internal memory,
Bluetooth, USB connectivity
PART CODE 1ASJETXN
DETAILS www.o2.co.uk

SONY ERICSSON W200i

★★★★★

£40 inc VAT
From www.orange.co.uk

The W200i is the cheapest phone in Sony Ericsson's Walkman range. It's a tiny handset in a vivid shade of pink, but it's also available in black for the same price.

The phone has a small screen, and its 128x160 resolution is lower than those of the more expensive Walkman phones. It's not much good for viewing images taken with the 0.3-megapixel camera, but the menus and text are clear enough. The keys are small but well spaced, so typing is easy.

The W200i has all the features you could need, except Bluetooth for wireless headsets and file transfers. The phone can send and receive emails and has a capable calendar application that lets you set reminders, as well as a Task List with alerts.

The W200i works well as a music phone. You can drop MP3 and AAC files on to the phone's 128MB memory card in Windows or use the Disc2Phone application, which automatically converts CDs to MP3 and copies them to the phone. Copying music is slow, taking 10 minutes to copy 128MB. Once you've copied your music, you can sort by artist but not album or genre. The supplied headphones sound reasonable, if rather light on bass, but you can plug your own into the supplied 3.5mm headphone adaptor.

If you don't listen to music, Nokia's 2310 has similar features and is half the price of the W200i. If you want a phone and an MP3 player, though, the W200i is a bargain.



SUMMARY

- ✓ Useful standard applications
- ✓ Great music player
- ✗ Slow to copy music

MOBILE PHONE GSM 900/1800/1900, GPRS data, 1.5in 128x160-resolution main display, 0.3-megapixel camera, 26MB internal memory, IR, USB connectivity
PART CODE W200i
DETAILS www.sonyericsson.com

3 Skypephone

★★★★★

£50 inc VAT
From www.three.co.uk



Skype is a Voice over IP (VoIP) telephone service that uses your PC to send calls over the internet rather than through normal telephone networks. The 3

Skypephone uses Skype to make calls to other Skype users over its data connection. Calls are free to other people using the Skype service.

Skype is integrated seamlessly into the phone. Press the large Skype button to launch the application, then choose a Skype name to sign up to the service, or enter your Skype username and password if you already have one. The contacts application also has a Skype name field, so you can ring a contact's normal phone or their Skype phone. Call quality when using Skype is reasonable. As with most VoIP services, voice had a slightly compressed and robotic quality, but it was easy to understand.

The handset is compact and stylish. The textured rear is comfortable to hold, the screen is bright and the keypad easy to use. The menu system has large icons and text sub-menus, and is functional and clear. Its calendar application lets you set appointments, and the music player can sort files on the supplied 256MB miniSD card by artist and album.

Even if you're not interested in Skype, 3's Skypephone is impressive for the price. It has many of the features of pricier phones, and if you have friends who use Skype it will save you a fortune. It's a Best Buy.



SUMMARY

- ✓ Very good value
- ✓ Easy to use
- ✓ Useful standard applications

MOBILE PHONE GSM 900/1800, GPRS, 3G data, 2in 220x176-resolution main display, 2-megapixel camera, 16MB internal memory, Bluetooth, USB connectivity
PART CODE WP-S1
DETAILS www.three.co.uk

FLY MOBILE SLT100

★★★★★

£50 inc VAT
From www.argos.co.uk

Fly Mobile's SLT100 is an unusual handset. It has a sliding keypad but also a touch screen and stylus.

The black and chrome finish makes it look expensive, and the keypad's slide mechanism feels strong. The directional keypad and short cut buttons feel flimsy, though. The number pad isn't particularly easy to use, and the body of the phone gets in the way of your thumb when you press the top row of buttons. You can always use the stylus to type on the tiny onscreen keyboard, but we found it quicker to use the keypad.

The SLT100 has impressive features for the price. There's a 2-megapixel camera, a music player and an email client, as well as a web browser and even a basic image editor. Photos look great on the SLT100's vibrant 240x320 screen, but looked underexposed once transferred to a PC. The supplied PC connection software looks dated but works well enough for backing up your contacts and transferring images from the phone and music to it. The phone has a microSD card slot for extra storage, and can play MP3 and AAC files. The music player is basic and it doesn't support ID3 tags, so it shows your music as a long list of filenames.

If you're after something a bit different, Fly Mobile's SLT100 may suit you. The 3 Skypephone is just as powerful, though, and is easier to use.



SUMMARY

- ✓ Vibrant screen
- ✓ Stylish
- ✗ Flimsy keypad

MOBILE PHONE GSM 900/1800/1900, GPRS data, 2.2in 240x320-resolution main display, 2-megapixel camera, 25MB internal memory, Bluetooth, IR, USB connectivity
PART CODE SLT100
DETAILS www.flymobile.co.uk

SONY ERICSSON K800i

★★★★★

£72 inc VAT
From www.vodafone.co.uk

The K800i was the first 3-megapixel camera phone we'd seen when we reviewed it in *Shopper 226*. It received a Best Buy award, and has since become good value on prepay as it nears the end of its life.

The K800i looks slightly dated compared with Sony Ericsson's K770i and Samsung's D900i, but it's still a smart-looking phone. Its display is superb, and its high-resolution colour menus run smoothly. The keypad is a little crowded, though, and the number keys are wobbly. Its design isn't as neat as that of the other 3-megapixel camera phones in the group. The lens is mounted in a bulge on the back of the phone, so the handset is fairly fat, and the cover sometimes slides open in your pocket, exposing the lens to dust.

The K800i's camera is very impressive. Daytime shots looked sharper than the K770i's and were on a par with the Samsung D900i's clear shots. The K800i's trump card is its flash, though. Instead of an LED, it has a proper Xenon flash such as you'd find on a digital camera. This makes it possible to take photos in pitch black.

The K800i shares the K770i's comprehensive standard suite of applications and easy PC synchronisation, as well as a fairly powerful web browser. Samsung's D900i is slimmer and better looking, but if you're after a versatile camera and a good web browser, snap up a K800i before they all sell out.



SUMMARY

- ✓ Useful standard applications
- ✓ Excellent camera
- ✗ Large

MOBILE PHONE GSM 900/1800/1900 3G 2100, GPRS, 3G data, 2.2in 240x320-resolution main display, 2-megapixel camera, 20MB internal memory, Bluetooth, USB connectivity
PART CODE K800i
DETAILS www.sonyericsson.com

SAMSUNG SGH-D900i

★★★★★

£100 inc VAT
From www.o2.co.uk



Like Fly Mobile's SLT100, Samsung's SGH-D900i has a 240x320 screen and a slide-out keypad. Our handset had a metallic pink finish, but it's also available in black.

The D900i's display is one of the best in the group, with a high resolution, clear text and high contrast. The handset has a ridge for your thumb, so it's easy to open and close with one hand. The thumb ridge gets in the way of the top of the directional keypad, though.

The menus are arranged in text lists, and each main option has a pop-up sub-list of options. They seem cluttered at first, but once you're used to the layout, navigation is very fast. The handset has the usual calendar and email applications and can synchronise contacts and calendar with your PC, but its primitive web browser refused to display our test web pages, while the poor MP3 player can't sort your music by artist or album.

The D900i has a 3-megapixel autofocus camera, and takes superb daytime shots. Photos taken in sunlight were in focus and correctly exposed, showing plenty of fine detail. There is also an LED flash, which works reasonably well for low-light close-ups.

The D900i looks great, is easy to use and has a camera that is bettered only by the Sony Ericsson K800i's. We weren't impressed by its web browser and music player, though, and it's expensive compared with the K800i.



SUMMARY

- ✓ Excellent camera
- ✓ Stylish
- ✗ Poor browser and MP3 player

MOBILE PHONE GSM 900/1800/1900, GPRS, 3G data, 2.2in 240x320-resolution main display, 3-megapixel camera, 65MB internal memory, Bluetooth, USB connectivity
PART CODE SGH-D900i
DETAILS www.samsung.co.uk

SONY ERICSSON T-Mobile... K770i

★★★★★

£100 inc VAT
From www.t-mobile.co.uk

Like the K800i, the K770i has Sony Ericsson's Cyber-shot branding and a 3.2-megapixel camera.

It's slimmer than the K800i, and its lens cover is stiffer and unlikely to come open in your pocket. The phone is more comfortable to use, as it has a directional keypad rather than a joystick and more space between the number keys. It doesn't feel as well made as the K800i or Samsung's D900i, though, and the plastic creaks when you hold it.

Sony Ericsson's menu system is easy to use, as each function is represented by both an icon and a text description. The phone has comprehensive standard applications, with excellent calendar, tasks and notes programs and easy PC synchronisation with the supplied software. The web browser is far better than the Samsung's D900i's, and could reformat even complicated pages to fit the screen.

Unlike the K800i, the K770i has only an LED camera light and not a full Xenon flash, so it can only cope with close-up photos in dim conditions. It took good shots in sunlight, but they suffered in comparison with those from the K800i and Samsung D900i. Images weren't always in focus, and colours appeared muddy.

The K770i is a good phone, but it can't match the K800i or Samsung D900i's camera quality or the D900i's build quality. If you want a good camera and web browser, buy the K800i; or for a slim and stylish camera phone, go for the D900i.



SUMMARY

- ✓ Useful standard applications
- ✗ Disappointing camera
- ✗ Creaky build quality

MOBILE PHONE GSM 900/1800/1900 3G 2100, GPRS, 3G data, 2in 240x320-resolution main display, 3.2-megapixel camera, 14MB internal memory, Bluetooth, USB connectivity
PART CODE K770i
DETAILS www.sonyericsson.com

SONY ERICSSON W880i

★★★★★

£135 inc VAT
From www.vodafone.co.uk

The W880i is the second Walkman phone in the group. It's much flashier than the W200i, but it's also far more expensive.

This is a gorgeous phone. It's less than a centimetre thick, and its brushed metal keyboard and screen surround look stylish and expensive. Its keypad is unusual but easy to use. The number keys are thin strips of metal rather than buttons, and are spaced so far apart that you're unlikely to hit the wrong button when dialling or texting.

The W880i's 240x320 screen is similar to the K770i's and K800i's, and is just as bright and clear. Its menu layout is also like the K800i's, with the same colourful icons and a similar selection of programs. The W880i works well as a music player. As with the W200i, you can drop music files on to the memory card in Windows, or use the Disc2Phone software to transfer music from CD. The phone comes with a 1GB memory card, which can store around 250 songs. The supplied headphones are far better than the W200i's. They plug into your ear to block outside noise and sound bassy and clear, if a little bright. You can also plug your own headphones into the supplied adaptor.

The W880i is a stylish phone and a superb music player, but it's pricy. We'd sacrifice some style and buy the W200i plus replacement headphones and a larger memory stick.



SUMMARY

- ✓ Useful standard applications
- ✓ Stylish
- ✗ Expensive

MOBILE PHONE GSM 900/1800/1900 3G 2100, GPRS, 3G data, 1.7in 240x320-resolution main display, 2-megapixel camera, 18MB internal memory, Bluetooth, USB connectivity
PART CODE W880i
DETAILS www.sonyericsson.com

NOKIA 6500 Slide

★★★★★

£170 inc VAT
From www.three.co.uk

The 6500 Slide is the most expensive phone in the group, but it also feels the best made. Its metal front and rear and strongly sprung keyboard slide give an impression of high quality.

The 6500's display has a 240x320 resolution. It's bright, with clear text, but the font and interface aren't as attractive as those of Sony Ericsson's K800i and W880i. The 6500's applications rival those of the Sony Ericsson handsets. There's an organiser, a to-do list, a notes application, stopwatch and countdown timer programs. The phone comes with a USB cable and Nokia's PC Suite software, which makes it simple to synchronise your contacts and calendar with Outlook or Outlook Express.

The 6500 has an excellent 3.2-megapixel camera. Daytime shots are as good as the Sony Ericsson K800i's, and the 6500's painfully bright LED makes night shots possible, if not as clear as on the K800i. The 6500 comes with a 256MB memory card and has a powerful music player, which lets you sort your music by artist, album and genre. The supplied headphones are poor, though, and you can't connect your own.

Nokia's 6500 feels as if it would last forever, but it's too expensive compared with the equally capable Sony Ericsson K800i and W880i and Samsung's D900i to recommend.



SUMMARY

- ✓ Feels well made
- ✓ Excellent camera
- ✗ Very expensive

MOBILE PHONE GSM 850/900/1800/1900 3G 2100, GPRS, EDGE, 3G data, 2.2in 240x320-resolution main display, 3.2-megapixel camera, 20MB internal memory, Bluetooth, USB connectivity
PART CODE 6500s H3G UK GV
DETAILS www.nokia.co.uk

The cost of prepaid Price plans examined

Visit most mobile networks' websites and they'll tell you how simple their pay-as-you-go price plans are. While it's true that calls on most prepaid tariffs now cost the same at peak and off-peak times, choosing the right tariff is still a minefield. To know how much you're likely to spend, you must take into account how many calls you make to other networks, how often you send text messages and how much you use the web browser.

The best way to choose a tariff is to work out how many minutes of phone calls you make every month and how many texts you send, then use the information below to choose the right tariff. Some phones record how many minutes of calls you make, and you can look at your sent text messages folder to see how many texts you've sent in a

given period. It's also important to consider which mobile networks the people you call regularly are on, as calling other networks on a prepaid tariff can be much more expensive than calling the same network or a landline. If your close friends and family use various networks, avoid the O₂ and T-Mobile Mates Rates and Text Appeal tariffs, as they charge extra for calling a rival service.

MONEY FOR NOTHING

Many networks offer bonus airtime and texts if you spend a set amount each month. Before you choose a tariff, think about whether you spend a lot of time chatting or prefer to communicate by text, as several tariffs give you free minutes or texts with each top-up. O₂'s Talk Anytime tariff could save you a lot if

you spend a long time on the phone, and T-Mobile will throw in free weekend texts if you top up your phone with £10 a month.

The final cost to consider is data. Mobile data is billed per megabyte downloaded, with most mobile internet pages taking up around 50KB. This means you can view around 20 pages with a megabyte of data. Some networks, such as Orange and T-Mobile, cap your data charges each day, so you never spend more than £2. Virgin has the most expensive data at £5 a megabyte, but access to the Virgin Bites range of mobile pages costs only 30p a day. Prepaid data is expensive, so if you plan to use the web regularly we'd recommend buying a phone on contract with an unlimited data bundle, which can cost as little as £5 a month.



TARIFF	3	O ₂	O ₂	O ₂	O ₂	ORANGE	ORANGE
	Flat12	Favourite Place	Talk Anytime	Text Anytime	Your Country	Speakeasy bonus top-up	Speakeasy unlimited text reward
SAME NETWORK							
Call cost (peak/off peak)	12p	25p for first three minutes, then 5p	25p for first three minutes, then 5p	25p for first three minutes, then 5p	25p for first three minutes, then 5p	15p	15p
SMS	12p	10p	10p	10p	10p	10p	10p
MMS	25p	25p	25p	25p	25p	30p	30p
OTHER MOBILE NETWORK							
Call cost (peak/off peak)	12p	40p	40p	40p	40p	15p	15p
SMS	12p	10p	10p	10p	10p	10p	10p
MMS	25p	25p	25p	25p	25p	30p	30p
LANDLINE							
Call cost (peak/off peak)	12p	25p for first three minutes, then 5p	25p for first three minutes, then 5p	25p for first three minutes, then 5p	25p for first 3 minutes then 5p	15p	15p
DATA							
Data cost	£1/MB	1MB free per month, £3/MB after	1MB free per month, £3/MB after	1MB free per month, £3/MB after	1MB free per month, £3/MB after	£2/day maximum charge	£2/day maximum charge
PROMOTIONS							
Bonus for £10 per month	None	500 free O ₂ and landline minutes from nominated postcode	50 free any-network minutes	300 free texts	50 free international landline and mobile minutes	£1 free airtime	300 free texts
Bonus for £15 per month	300 free minutes or texts + 300 free 3 minutes	None	100 free any network minutes	500 free texts	100 free international landline and mobile minutes	None	None
Bonus for £20 per month	700 free minutes or texts + 300 free 3 minutes	None	None	None	None	£4 free airtime	600 free texts
Bonus for £30 per month	None	None	150 free any network minutes	Unlimited free texts	300 free international landline and mobile minutes	£9 free airtime	Unlimited texts
Other	Various text, data and call bundles available	None	None	None	None	Various text, data and call bundles available	Various text, data and call bundles available



TARIFF	T-MOBILE	T-MOBILE	T-MOBILE	VIRGIN	VODAFONE	VODAFONE
	Everyone	Mates Rates	Text Appeal	Pay as you go	Anynet	Anytime
SAME NETWORK						
Call cost (peak/off peak)	15p	8p	20p	15p	30p/10p	30p for first 3 minutes then 10p
SMS	10p	5p	3p	3p	10p	10p
MMS	20p	20p	20p	30p	36p	36p
OTHER MOBILE NETWORK						
Call cost (peak/off peak)	15p	40p	40p	15p	30p/10p	30p for first 3 minutes then 10p
SMS	10p	10p	3p	3p	10p	10p
MMS	20p	20p	20p	30p	36p	36p
LANDLINE						
Call cost (peak/off peak)	15p	20p	20p	15p	30p/10p	30p for first 3 minutes then 10p
DATA						
Data cost	£1/day maximum charge	£1/day maximum charge	£1/day maximum charge	£5/MB (normal sites), 30p/day (Virgin Mobile Bites)	Up to £1 for 15MB in a day	Up to £1 for 15MB in a day
PROMOTIONS						
Bonus for £10 per month	Free weekend texts	Free weekend texts	Free weekend texts	None	None	None
Bonus for £15 per month	None	None	None	None	None	None
Bonus for £20 per month	20% of top-up as credit	20% of top-up as credit	20% of top-up as credit	None	None	None
Bonus for £30 per month	None	None	None	None	None	None
Other	None	None	None	Various text and call bundles available, 5 minutes free calls with every 5 sent, 5 free texts with every 5 sent	Free weekend calls if £5 spent during the week, text and call bundles available	Free weekend calls if £5 spent during the week, text and call bundles available

BUDGET BUY			BEST BUY			
MANUFACTURER	MOTOROLA	NOKIA	VIRGIN MOBILE	O ₂	SONY ERICSSON	3
Model	MotoFone F3	2310	Lobster 320	Jet	W200i	Skypephone
Rating	★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
HARDWARE						
Main display size	2in	1.5in	1.5in	2in	1.5in	2in
Main display	N/A	96x98	128x128	Not disclosed	128x160	220x176
Second display	No	No	No	No	No	No
Camera	None	None	0.3-megapixel	None	0.3-megapixel	2-megapixel
Flash	N/A	N/A	No	N/A	No	No
Connectivity	None	None	USB	Bluetooth, USB	IR, USB	Bluetooth, USB
Internal memory	None	4MB	2MB	55MB	26MB	16MB
Memory card slot (supplied)	None	None	None	None	Memory Stick Micro M2 (128MB)	MicroSD (256MB)
Operating frequencies	GSM 900/1800	GSM 900/1800	GSM 900/1800	GSM 850/900/1800/1900	GSM 900/1800/1900	GSM 900/1800
Wireless data	None	None	None	GPRS	GPRS	GPRS, 3G
Size	114x47x9mm	105x44x19mm	82x41x15mm	118x48x19mm	101x44x18mm	100x44x14mm
Weight	68g	85g	70g	121g	85g	86g
FEATURES						
Operating system	Proprietary	Proprietary	Proprietary	Proprietary	Proprietary	Proprietary
Email client	None	None	None	POP3/IMAP	POP3/IMAP	POP3/IMAP
Audio playback formats	None	None	MP3	None	MP3, AAC	MP3, AAC
FM radio	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Web browser	None	None	None	Proprietary	Proprietary	Proprietary
Accessories included	None	Bud headphones	USB data cable	Desk charger, car charger, mono headset, USB data cable	Bud headphones, USB data cable	Bud headphones, USB data cable
Talk time	8.5 hours	6 hours	2.5 hours	9 hours	7 hours	4.5 hours
Standby time	12.5 days	16.5 days	5 days	22.5 days	15 days	13.5 days
BUYING INFORMATION						
Price SIM-free (inc VAT)	£24	£35	N/A	N/A	£79	N/A
Prepay price (inc VAT)	£10	£20	£25	£40	£40	£50
SIM-free supplier	www.mphone.co.uk	www.mphone.co.uk	N/A	N/A	www.expansys.com	N/A
Contract/prepay supplier	www.orange.co.uk	www.t-mobile.co.uk	www.virginmobile.com	www.o2.co.uk	www.orange.co.uk	www.three.co.uk
Handset details	www.motorola.com	www.nokia.co.uk	www.virginmobile.com	www.o2.co.uk	www.sonyericsson.com	www.three.co.uk
Part code	MC3-41J11	2310	320	1ASJETXN	W200i	WP-S1

MOST WANTED						
MANUFACTURER	FLY MOBILE	SONY ERICSSON	SAMSUNG	SONY ERICSSON	SONY ERICSSON	NOKIA
Model	SLT100	K800i	SGH-D900i	K770i	W880i	6500 Slide
Rating	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★
HARDWARE						
Main display size	2.2in	2.2in	2.2in	2in	1.7in	2.2in
Main display	240x320	240x320	240x320	240x320	240x320	240x320
Second display	No	No	No	No	No	No
Camera	2-megapixel	2-megapixel	3-megapixel	3.2-megapixel	2-megapixel	3.2-megapixel
Flash	LED	LED	LED	LED	No	LED
Connectivity	Bluetooth, IR, USB	Bluetooth, USB	Bluetooth, USB	Bluetooth, USB	Bluetooth, USB	Bluetooth, USB
Internal memory	25MB	20MB	65MB	14MB	18MB	20MB
Memory card slot (supplied)	MicroSD (0MB)	Memory Stick Micro M2 (0MB)	MicroSD (0MB)	Memory Stick Micro M2 (0MB)	Memory Stick Micro M2 (1024MB)	MicroSD (256MB)
Operating frequencies	GSM 900/1800/1900	GSM 900/1800/1900 3G 2100	GSM 900/1800/1900	GSM 900/1800/1900 3G 2100	GSM 900/1800/1900 3G 2100	GSM 850/900/1800/1900 3G 2100
Wireless data	GPRS	GPRS, 3G	GPRS, 3G	GPRS, 3G	GPRS, 3G	GPRS, EDGE, 3G
Size	96x49x15mm	105x47x22mm	93x45x17mm	105x47x14mm	103x46x9mm	97x47x16mm
Weight	101g	115g	95g	95g	71g	123g
FEATURES						
Operating system	Proprietary	Proprietary	Proprietary	Proprietary	Proprietary	Proprietary
Email client	POP3/IMAP	POP3/IMAP	POP3/IMAP	POP3/IMAP	POP3/IMAP	POP3/IMAP
Audio playback formats	MP3, AAC	MP3, AAC	MP3, AAC	MP3, AAC	MP3, AAC	MP3, AAC, WMA
FM radio	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Web browser	Proprietary	Proprietary	Proprietary	Proprietary	Proprietary	Proprietary
Accessories included	Bud headphones, USB data cable, A/V cable	Bud headphones, USB data cable	Bud headphones, USB data cable	Bud headphones, USB data cable	Bud headphones, USB data cable	Bud headphones, USB data cable, A/V cable
Talk time	2.5 hours	7 hours	3.5 hours	10 hours	6.5 hours	6 hours
Standby time	7.5 days	14.5 days	9 days	16.5 days	17.5 days	13.5 days
BUYING INFORMATION						
Price SIM-free (inc VAT)	N/A	£147	£154	£197	£174	£250
Prepay price (inc VAT)	£50	£72	£100	£100	£135	£170
SIM-free supplier	N/A	www.mphone.co.uk	www.expansys.com	www.expansys.com	www.mphone.co.uk	www.expansys.com
Contract/prepay supplier	www.argos.co.uk	www.vodafone.co.uk	www.o2.co.uk	www.t-mobile.co.uk	www.vodafone.co.uk	www.three.co.uk
Handset details	www.flymobile.co.uk	www.sonyericsson.com	www.samsung.co.uk	www.sonyericsson.com	www.sonyericsson.com	www.nokia.co.uk
Part code	SLT100	K800i	SGH-D900i	K770i	W880i	6500s H3G UK GV

Labs verdict Prepay mobile phones

Prepay phones are getting cheaper, and it's amazing that you can buy one for just £10. Motorola's MotoFone F3 is an interesting idea, but its interface is poor. You have to spend more to get a phone that's both cheap and easy to use. Nokia's 2310 is superb value at just £20. It's not ideal for heavy texters due to its wobbly keypad, but it's fine for occasional use. It's a Budget Buy.

At the other end of the price scale, Samsung's D900i impressed us with its excellent build

quality, stylish looks and superb camera. It's a Most Wanted prepay handset.

The big surprise of this Labs, however, is 3's Skypephone. The integrated Skype program works brilliantly and could save you a lot of money on calls, but even if you don't use Skype you'll still benefit from the simple user interface, comprehensive standard applications and good music player. It's also good value at £50, so it wins a Best Buy award. **CS**

